



**News Flash** – The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is pleased to announce that a new educational resource, the *2008 PQRI Fact Sheet*, has been posted to the Physician's Quality Reporting Initiative (PQRI) webpage on the CMS website. This Fact Sheet provides an overview of the 2008 Physician Quality Reporting Initiative. To access this new and all available PQRI educational resources, visit <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/PQRI> on the CMS website and click on the Educational Resources tab. Once on the *Educational Resources* page, scroll down to the "Downloads" section and click on the "2008 PQRI Fact Sheet" link.

MLN Matters Number: MM5971

Related Change Request (CR) #: 5971

Related CR Release Date: March 28, 2008

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Related CR Transmittal #: R248PI

Implementation Date: April 28, 2008

## CR 5550 Clarification - Signature Requirements

### Provider Types Affected

Physicians and other providers who bill Medicare Contractors (Carriers, Fiscal Intermediaries, Regional Home Health Intermediaries, Part A/B Medicare Administrative Contractors, including Durable Medical Equipment Medicare Administrative Contractors) for care provided to Medicare beneficiaries in hospice.

### What You Need to Know

CR 5971, from which this article is taken, clarifies the instructions on signature requirements for the certification of terminal illness for hospice. It provides that Medicare contractors will accept a facsimile of an original written or electronic signature in documenting the certification of terminal illness for hospice.

Make sure that your billing staffs are aware that, to document the certification of terminal illness for hospice, a facsimile of an original written or electronic signature is acceptable

### Background

CR 5971, from which this article is taken, clarifies the instructions in *Medicare Program Integrity Manual* Chapter 3 (Verifying Potential Errors and Taking

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Corrective Actions), Subsection 3.4.1.1B (Signature Requirements) that address the signature requirements for the certification of terminal illness for hospice, that were provided in CR 5550 ([Various Medical Review Clarifications](#)).

Subsection 3.4.1.1B of the manual notes that Medicare contractors require a legible identifier for services provided/ordered. It further requires that when this documentation is for medical review purposes, the only acceptable method of documenting the provider signature is by written or an electronic signature. Stamp signatures are not acceptable to sign an order or other medical record documentation for medical review purposes.

CR 5971 provides that there is an exception to this requirement.

It announces that a facsimile of an original written or electronic signature is acceptable for the certification of terminal illness for hospice. Please be sure to note however, that while a signature facsimile is acceptable in this instance; it and **hard copies of a physician's electronic signature** must be present in the patient's medical record.

## Additional Information

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You can find more information about the signature requirements for the certification of terminal illness for hospice by going to CR 5971, located at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/Transmittals/downloads/R248PI.pdf> on the CMS website. You will find updated *Medicare Program Integrity Manual* Chapter 3 (Verifying Potential Errors and Taking Corrective Actions), Subsection 3.4.1.1B (Signature Requirements) as an attachment to this CR.

If you have any questions, please contact your Medicare contractor at their toll-free number, which may be found at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/CallCenterTollNumDirectory.zip> on the CMS website.

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